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O 101514Z APR 06  
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1486  
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 001469

SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y( CLASSIFICATION PARA 2 ADDED)

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE; NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/MUSTAFA;  
DS/IP/NEA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/10/2016  
TAGS: [MOPS](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [PREL](#) [IS](#)  
SUBJECT: ESCALATING VIOLENCE IN GAZA

REF: A. JERUSALEM 01382

[1](#)B. FBIS GMP 200604100540005

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The IDF responded to several weeks of steadily increasing Qassam rocket attacks with a barrage of artillery and missile strikes in Gaza. Presidential Security sources reported the Israeli strikes killed 17 Palestinians, including several civilians, and destroyed two homes. Local observers describe the increase in Qassam rocket attacks as part of an effort by some militant Fatah factions to destabilize the HAMAS-led government by provoking Israel.  
END SUMMARY.

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IDF Responds to Increased  
Qassam Rocket Attacks  
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[1](#)2. (c) PA Presidential Security contacts confirmed that a total of 17 Palestinians were killed and 36 were injured by IDF missile and artillery strikes in Gaza between April 7 and April 9:

-- On April 7 at 1215L, Israeli warplanes fired a rocket into the main Fatah office in Beit Lahya in the Gaza Strip, resulting in damage to the building and one reported injury.

-- On April 7 at approximately 2300L, an IAF missile strike on a Popular Resistance Committee (PRC) training facility in Rafah killed four militants and a five year-old boy. PRC leader Iyad Abu Einain was killed along with his five-year-old son when a missile struck his car as it entered a PRC training facility. A second missile killed four other militants when they rushed to pull Abu Einain from his burning car.

-- On April 8 at 2115L, IDF artillery units fired on a facility used by Abu al-Arish Brigades in Khan Yunis, killing 6 militants and wounding 8 others.

-- On April 9 at 0400L, IDF artillery fired on targets in the heavily populated areas of Beit Lahya and Beit Hanun. Israeli media sources said militants were using the sites to prepare Qassam attacks on Israel. Presidential Security sources said the artillery rounds destroyed homes belonging to the al-Masri and al-Attar families and killed three al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades militants. 12 civilians were also reported injured.

-- On April 9 at 0830, IDF artillery fire struck a mattress factory in Jabaliya, injuring one person.

-- 0915 on April 9, IDF artillery fired on a National Security Forces (NSF) outpost in Beit Hanun, killing NSF driver Yasir Abu Jarad and injuring 9 NSF officers. IDF spokesmen had previously threatened to target NSF facilities if the PA placed the security force under HAMAS control (ref A).

13. (C) NOTE: The IDF attacks came after a period of steadily increasing Qassam attacks from Gaza into Israel. According to ConGen analysis of media reports and information from Presidential Security contacts, since March 22 at least 45 Qassam rockets have been fired from Gaza into Israel, resulting in damage but no reported injuries or deaths. The increase in rocket fire also included the launching of a Katyusha rocket by PIJ elements toward the Israeli city of Ashkelon on April 5. Presidential Security sources indicated that militants associated with two factions of the Fatah affiliated al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, the al-Nasir Brigades and the Abu al-Arish Brigades, were responsible for most of the Qassam attacks. END NOTE.

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Mixed Reaction from HAMAS and PIJ;  
Fatah Militants Promise More Attacks  
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14. (SBU) HAMAS spokesmen Ghazi al-Hamad called the IDF attacks a "brutal massacre" and described it as "a message to President Abbas that Israel is not interested in peace or political compromises." Al-Hamad added that the options for resisting the occupation are "innumerable" and that the use of rockets is just one option (ref B). Interior Minister Said Siam put out a statement on April 9 advising militants that they should avoid military training centers in light of the Israeli escalation.<sup>8</sup> The military wing of HAMAS

published an April 9 statement affirming their support for the HAMAS-led government and threatening to renew rocket attacks on Israel.

15. (C) PIJ published contradictory statements in reaction to the Israeli attacks in Gaza. Gaza FSNI reported that PIJ militants in Gaza City began distributing flyers on April 9 stating that PIJ had agreed to suspend attacks on Israel for ten days in an attempt to convince the IDF to stop shelling, but that attacks would be renewed if the shelling persisted. PIJ spokesmen Khaled al-Batsch later told the Palestinian media that the flyers were "fabricated" and that PIJ would continue to "spearhead the resistance project" with attacks on Israel. Spokesmen for the PRC and militant Fatah factions responded to the Israel strikes in Gaza by pledging to continue Qassam rocket attacks on Israel.

WALLES